

University helps children get to grips with literacy

Reception year pupils across Stoke-on-Trent are to receive the gift of a free book thanks to Staffordshire University.

The donation of ten thousand books is part of the Our Big Read campaign, spearhead by the Sentinel and involving the charity Beanstalk, Stoke Speaks Out and Stoke-on-Trent City council.

Staffordshire University Deputy Vice Chancellor Professor Allan Howells visited City Central library last week which has taken delivery of the children's classic storybook *Monkey Puzzle* by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. The books are being distributed to the City's primary schools this week.

He said: "It's important that Staffordshire University is involved in Our Big Read as we have a responsibility to get our children reading and reading is the key to unlocking opportunities in life."

The University is also seeking student volunteers to go in to schools and help primary school children with their reading.

Deborah Sanderson, Head of Graduate and Business Relations, said: "Staffordshire University is part and parcel of the community and our business is education. We are already in talks about our students volunteering their time to help children in schools to learn to read and we hope to be out there doing it by September."

Stoke-on-Trent Libraries Principal librarian Jayne Stanley said: "It's everybody's job to get children reading and it's one of the best things you can do. Children on the day they're born can have a book and reading for leisure, having fun and sharing stories will help develop a love of reading."

"We have a Summer Reading Challenge, accredited by the Children's University, designed to keep children reading through the school holidays. We hope Our Big Read will have children and their parents coming to the library wanting more."

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